2015
ECO Net Capacity Building
Block Grant Application

Table of Contents

The Puget Sound Partnership is seeking applications from eligible organizations to implement projects that further the goals of the ECO Networks and related Action Agenda priorities.

General Information

Eligible Applicants: The ECO Net Block grants are available to member organizations within the 12 local ECO Networks around Puget Sound.
Estimated Funds Available: $120,000
Number of Awards: One for each established local ECO Net
Grant Amount: $10,000 per ECO Net
Project Length: Projects must be completed no later than June 30, 2015
Proposals Due: July 1, 2014, 5 p.m.
Puget Sound Partnership Contact: Cara Ianni, Cara.ianni@psp.wa.gov (360) 464-2005

Proposals must meet criteria defined in "Project Elements" section below.

Overview and Intent of Funding

The Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership) supports the ECO Network (ECO Net) as a structure to build the region-wide capacity for effective stewardship programs that serve a diversity of Puget Sound residents. To achieve recovery goals, the public needs clear, consistent messages about Puget Sound issues and what actions they can take to restore the Sound.

Networks, such as the ECO Net, are essential to coordinate the efforts required to increase public awareness of Puget Sound issues and ultimately foster the behavior changes needed to support its recovery. ECO Net allows local organizations to actively collaborate in order to:
- increase consistency and coverage
- share knowledge and resources
- engage in partnerships
- enhance effectiveness of individual programs

To meet the network's goals of coordination, consistency, efficacy, and partnerships between the myriad organizations serving Puget Sound residents, the Partnership is requesting applications for membership development projects from each of the twelve ECO Networks. The intent of this funding is to:
- Facilitate participation in ECO Net by a diversity of member organizations
- Position ECO Net as a key provider of education and outreach services within the community

This funding is intended to increase membership and networking of local ECO Nets to include organizations that are either under-represented or not typically involved/associated with Puget Sound recovery efforts. As a result of this funding, ECO Nets are expected to increase membership diversity, elevate member engagement in ECO Net activities (both new and existing members), and reach new audiences via partnerships with stakeholder/community groups. To support these objectives, a limited portion of grant funds (up to 40%) can be used for capacity building efforts that support ECO Net members' ability to serve Puget Sound residents and implement effective programming.

The Partnership intends to fund collective efforts of local ECO Net members and award one grant to each of the twelve established ECO Nets in the Puget Sound region.

Benefits to ECO Nets

There is a tremendous diversity of organizations in the Puget Sound region that provide environmental education and outreach programming to the public. These organizations encompass a wide range of skill sets, geography-served, focus areas, target audiences, organization structure, and other attributes. Through the coordination of these wide-ranging organizations and their differentiated activities, via ECO Net, member organizations increase their capacity to share resources, engage in robust collaborations, and expand the reach of clear, consistent messages.

Organizations that have an interest in the health of the Puget Sound ecosystem and work to protect and improve it extend well beyond environmental, wildlife and water quality groups. Everybody who calls this place home has a stake in Puget Sound's health. Accordingly, examples of organizational diversity that may be beneficial in ECO Net membership include groups that focus on:
- Food and food systems
- Horticulture and landscaping
- Civic and service organizations (e.g., voters leagues, Rotary)
- Tourism and business (e.g. Visitor & Convention Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce)
- Environmental justice
- Outdoor recreation
- Environmental activism
- Wildlife (e.g., Audubon chapters)
- Fisheries (e.g., Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups)
- Sustainability and sustainable energy
- Health and human services
- Fishing and hunting
- Land trusts and real estate

Membership development activities funded through this project are intended to improve the network rather than simply adding more members to the roster. ECO Nets shall start by performing an analysis of their current membership. Following, ECO Nets shall choose strategic recruitment objectives and methods based on their local needs and preferences.

Besides engaging a diversity of organizations through direct participation in the ECO Net, this funding intends to position the ECO Nets as the go-to-source of environmental education and outreach services for other local or regional stakeholder and community groups. Like the wide range of organizations that provide environmental programming to the public, there are many community groups that serve audiences with an interest in natural resources. Building relationships and networks between ECO Nets and these community groups will help ECO Net members reach new audiences, and allow community members to have greater access to programming that meets the needs and interests of their members.

These stakeholder/community groups include K-12 schools, sportsmen's groups, outdoor recreation, neighborhood associations, professional landscapers, green building, and a whole host of others, including groups listed above as potential members. They can also include natural resource professional groups, such as Local Integrating Organizations (LIOs), local governments, tribes and watershed groups.

Finally, up to 40% of the grant funding can be used towards efforts that build members' capacity to provide effective programming related to building awareness, promoting stewardship, and both enabling and measuring behavior change. Capacity-building activities can include professional development, networking efforts and other actions that meet the criteria described in the "Project Elements" section below. Local ECO Nets may coordinate with other ECO Net chapters when desirable. Activities funded under this portion of the grant are intended to increase the value of ECO Net for its members, and thereby elevate the level of participation in local ECO Nets of both new and existing members. Similar to the membership development activities described above, increasing engagement will increase members' capacity to effectively collaborate, share resources and support public stewardship of Puget Sound.

Guidelines and minimum efforts for funded projects are described in the "Project Elements" section below.

Source of Grant Funding

Funds for these grants are from the State of Washington General Fund and are budgeted for Puget Sound recovery and implementation of the Action Agenda for Puget Sound. Specifically, these funds support the Action Agenda's public engagement strategies to foster broad-scale actions that address polluted water, degraded habitat and imperiled species (see sections D5 – D7 of Action Agenda: http://www.psp.wa.gov/action_agenda_2012-13.php).

Who can receive grant funding?

Only proposals for collaborative work of ECO Net member organizations shall be accepted. **There is a limit of one application per ECO Net.**

The following **SHALL NOT** be accepted:
- Applications for the work of less than three individual organizations, working in partnership (more than three is encouraged)
- Applications for the work of organizations or partnerships that are not participating ECO Net members
- Applications that are not endorsed by the local ECO Net through a collaborative process

A single organization must be designated as the project's **Fiscal Sponsor** for receipt and management of the grant. The Fiscal Sponsor must be a member of the local ECO Net. The Fiscal Sponsor shall provide project management, financial management, contract management, and be responsible for fulfilling contract requirements. The Fiscal Sponsor may also subcontract with other organizations within the local ECO Net to implement project tasks.

Applications must be submitted via the local ECO Net Coordinator. The local ECO Net Coordinator's agency does NOT have to be the fiscal sponsor, nor does the local ECO Net Coordinator need to be the project's coordinator. The purpose of application submission through the local ECO Net Coordinator is to ensure collaboration and cooperation within the local ECO Net and coordination of activities utilizing this funding source. This does not prohibit the local ECO Net Coordinator's organization from being a fiscal sponsor or project coordinator, however, there still must be demonstrated support by the local ECO Net membership.

The following are eligible to act as **fiscal sponsors**:
- **Not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organizations.** Proof of nonprofit status is required with your application. You must have at least one of the following documentation:
  - Registration as a not-for-profit organization with the Washington State Secretary of State's Office; or
  - Proof of 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.
- **Government entities**. This includes federal and Washington state agencies, public and private institutions of higher education, local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes within Puget Sound, and special purpose districts.

Who cannot receive funding?
- Businesses and for-profit enterprises
- Any organization located outside of the twelve counties in Puget Sound
- Individuals
- Organizations that are not members of a local ECO Net

What are the match requirements?

There are **no** match requirements for this grant, however projects with non-federal matching funds are encouraged and favored. Eligible forms of match include:
- Cash
- Volunteer or donated time
- Donated services or products
- Equipment
- Salaries
- Agency overhead/indirect costs
- Other verifiable costs

Eligible/Ineligible costs

What costs can the grant pay for?
Grant funds are provided on a reimbursement basis. Grant funding may be used for project coordination staff salaries, benefits, travel, advertising, workshops, events, subcontractors (including those providing professional development services), printing and distributing materials, rental equipment and supplies. Indirect costs are allowed up to 15% of the total grant amount.

What costs can't the grant pay for?
The following activities are **not** eligible for grant funding:
- Starting a business
- Fundraising activities, including providing services or creating products for which you receive payment from other parties
- Collecting materials for recycling or disposal
- Lobbying any state or local government official
- Purchasing property, capital goods or major equipment
- Legal expenses

More information on eligible and ineligible costs is available in Appendix A.
The Partnership may terminate grant agreements if spending is inconsistent with stated guidelines.

Application Process and Timeline

1. **Develop Proposal with Local ECO Net**
   o Each ECO Net creates local criteria for deciding which process and/or activities to pursue. At least three ECO Net members are expected to participate in project activities to receive funding. Participation by more than three members is desirable.
      o For example, local criteria may include: project must benefit majority of membership, must involve participation from a minimum number of partners (determined by the ECO Net but at least three to receive funding), etc.
   o Run a collaborative and inclusive process for deciding what activities to pursue, using the local criteria created. An inclusive process is one where all ECO Net members given the opportunity, and adequate time, to participate in the determination and development of project activities.
   o See information on **Question and Answers** in the timeline below.

2. Application Submission

The application template is available in the **Application Instructions** section below. An estimated budget must be included in the submittal. Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. on July 1, 2014**. Applications will be accepted prior to the due date and will be reviewed upon receipt. Applications must be submitted via email to Cara.Ianni@psp.wa.gov or mailed to:

The Puget Sound Partnership
ECO Net Block Grant
Attn: Cara Ianni
326 East D Street
Tacoma, WA 98421-1801

3. Application Review and Granting

Applications will be reviewed and contracts negotiated within approximately four to eight weeks following submission.

4. Timeline

Release of *ECO Net Puget Sound Starts Here Implementation Block Grant*	April 29, 2014
Question & Answers. A Q&A conference call is scheduled for May 29, 2014 at 2pm. Submit questions in writing prior to the call to the ECO Net Coordinator at Cara.ianni@psp.wa.gov. The conference call number is (360) 407-3780, PIN: 211 211#	May 29, 2014
Questions and Answers posted on Puget Sound Partnership Funding Website (http://www.psp.wa.gov/funding.php)	June 3, 2014
Applications due. Applications will be accepted prior to the due date and will be reviewed upon receipt.	July 1, 2014
Application details negotiated and contracts drafted.	Four to eight weeks (estimated) after applications received by the Partnership
Begin grant work	Date of execution

Project Elements

Projects eligible for funding must address the following elements:

Project implementation must involve at least three ECO Net member organizations; participation by more than three member organizations is preferable.

Projects shall result in meaningful and measurable increases in:
- The diversity of ECO Net member organizations
- ECO Net member outreach to new audiences via partnerships with stakeholder/community groups
- Active participation of ECO Net members (both new and existing members)

Of project funding, at least 60% of funds must be used towards increasing member diversity (including performing a membership analysis) and building connections between ECO Net and stakeholder/community groups. No more that 40% of funds can be used towards activities that build the capacity of members to implement effective education and outreach programming. These capacity-building activities can include professional development (e.g. training), networking efforts or other activities, and must meet following criteria: 1) Activities are open to the entire membership; and 2) Activities have a clear connection building member's

capacity to provide effective programming related to building awareness, promoting stewardship and enabling behavior change.

At a minimum, ECO Nets are expected to increase the number of member organizations by 10% of their current level. Recruitment strategies shall be based on gaps identified in a membership analysis. This funding is intended to increase membership to include organizations that are under-represented or not typically involved/associated with Puget Sound recovery efforts; ECO Nets are encouraged to look beyond natural resource organizations in their recruitment activities.

Efforts to reach new audiences (i.e., community members), via partnerships with local stakeholder/community groups, shall be measured through the combined number of constituents served by the partnering community groups. For example, if an ECO Net chooses to reach out the local business community via the Chamber of Commerce, the number of business members served by the Chamber would constitute the number of audience members reached by the ECO Net. Grant-funded efforts shall position ECO Net to reach an audience of these constituents that totals either 2,000 individuals or 3% of the ECO Net's service area population.

An increase in active participation of members in ECO Net-organized activities can include greater attendance and participation in member meetings, subcommittees, professional development and other collaborative efforts, such as outreach and networking events. Projects are expected to increase member engagement by at least 20% from current levels identified in the membership analysis.

Specific performance measures for the project shall be determined in the Membership Development Plan, which shall be created through a collaborative process between local ECO Net members during project implementation. The Membership Development Plan is subject to approval by the Partnership and must include a good faith effort to meet the funding's intention in letter and in spirit.

Project evaluation must include an estimate, and justification for the estimate, of the ECO Net's increased outreach capacity to new audiences as a result of the project. This may include an estimate of the number and types of new residents, interest groups and organizations that the ECO Net is positioned to reach as a result of the project's activities.

Other examples of performance measures are provided below, as guidance for the types of results that are expected to be measured as part of this funding. (Projects will not be required to include all of the measurements listed below):
- Number of organizations approached as potential new members
- Number and description of outreach materials/tools created to reach community partners
- Number of new members added to local chapter
- Percent increase in member activity from baseline level determined in membership analysis
- Number of ECO Net collaborative efforts/events
    - Number of community members reached through these efforts
- Number of stakeholder/community groups approached as potential partners
- Number of networking events (face-to-face) with potential stakeholder/community groups
- Number and description of outreach materials/tools created to reach stakeholder/community groups
- Number of collaborations/partnerships between ECO Net members and stakeholder/community groups
    - Number of community members reached through these efforts

Co-branding project activities with network brands established previous to ECO Net (e.g., EETAC, HCWEN, KEEP, WWIN, Stewardship Network of the San Juans) is allowed and encouraged. Any co-branded activities or products must clarify the network's status as a local chapter of ECO Net and meet the "Can I Join" membership guidelines specified on ECO Net's webpage: http://www.psp.wa.gov/econet.php.

The table below provides details on project tasks that must be incorporated into the project's **Work Plan**:

Tasks and Eligible Activities	Why fund this task?	What PSP will provide
Conduct a membership analysis that characterizes the current status of local chapter membership. Factors to be analyzed shall be developed with collective input from local ECO Net membership.	A membership analysis will allow the ECO Net, as a whole, to find gaps in membership and identify what new members would be desirable for recruitment. The analysis can also characterize the level of engagement in ECO Net among members and identify barriers, motivators and methods to increasing engagements.	Examples of types of diversity measures that could be analyzed, including lists of specific examples within each category.
Create a Membership Development Plan with based on results of membership analysis. Plan must be developed with collective input from local ECO Net membership. Grant funded activities can include creation and dissemination of outreach materials (including online resources), networking efforts (e.g., speed-dating type event) and other activities that have a clear connection to building relationships between ECO Net potential members and/or appropriate community groups.	Developing a plan for membership and member development will allow for coordination between local ECO Net chapters, including sharing resources and information, collective troubleshooting and collaboration on similar efforts.	Day-long training for Project Coordinator on membership development strategies (please budget for staff time and travel accordingly for a Seattle metropolitan area training). Coordination of member development opportunities (e.g. trainings, networking events, outreach to natural resource stakeholder groups) when collaboration between local ECO Net chapters or other entities is desirable.
Implement Membership Development plan. Coordinate with PSP staff and other ECO Net chapters when appropriate.		Coordination of member development opportunities (e.g. trainings, networking events, outreach to community groups) when collaboration between local ECO Net chapters is desirable.
Evaluate success of membership development activities. Evaluation and final report must include an estimate of, and justification for, the ECO Net's increased outreach capacity to new audiences.	Document successes and lessons learned will assist ECO Net in future membership/member development activities.	

Application Evaluation Criteria:

To be eligible for funding, projects must meet the following criteria:

- Project Approach – Project aligns with funding intent, in both letter and in spirit; project aligns with ECO Net goals; project is a collaborative effort between at least three local ECO Net members (more partners is desirable); project meets minimum effort criteria.
- Project Team – The team, collectively and as individuals, displays appropriate skill sets and experience; organizational capacity is appropriate; partnership member roles are well-defined and appropriate to their tasks.
- Project Work Plan – Tasks, staffing, timeline and spending plan are appropriate and logical.
- Budget – Budget is clear and logical; costs and cost basis are appropriate; indirect rates fall within limits.
- Proposal was developed collectively with input from membership.

Application Instructions

Submittals must be written in no less than 12-point font on letter-size paper with one-inch margins. Applications are limited to a maximum of five pages, which includes the cover page, project description and a one-page budget estimate. Applications that exceed the page limit will not be reviewed. Applications must include the following information:

Cover Page (one page):

Name of Local ECO Network:

Local ECO Network Coordinator submitting this application:

Fiscal Sponsor:

Project Coordinator:

Mailing Address:

Street Address (if different from the mailing address):

Telephone:

Fax Number:

E-mail Address:

Fiscal Contact:

Telephone:

E-mail Address:

UBI Number:

EIN Number:

DUNS Number:

Statewide Vendor Number:

Project Description: LIMITED TO THREE PAGES (applications exceeding this limit will not be reviewed)

Please provide a description of the project which must include the following information:

- Provide a **work plan** for project tasks.
    - **See Project Elements section above for more information on project tasks that must be incorporated into the project's work plan.** Your work plan tasks must include, but are not limited to, the following:
        - Conducting a membership analysis
        - Creating a Membership Development Plan
        - Implementing the Membership Development Plan
        - Evaluating membership/member development efforts
    - Results of a membership analysis, and details on what new members, community groups and/or capacity building efforts on which this project will focus, are <u>not</u> required in this proposal, however please provide steps and a timeline for determining these details in your work plan. For each task, the work plan must include the following:
        - Brief list of steps to complete activity, including process to allow for input from local ECO Net members when required
        - Deliverables (i.e., products or results of the activity)
        - Timeline
    - An example work plan had been provided in the section below.
- Brief description of approach for developing recruitment and outreach strategies, for both new member and outreach to natural resource stakeholder/community groups, discussed by the membership in the proposal development process.
- Brief description of approach for determining potential capacity building activities as discussed by the membership in the proposal development process.
- Brief description of the experience and capacity of key staff and organizations involved in project coordination, including what project tasks for which they are responsible.
- Brief description of how proposed activities align with your local ECO Net's strategic plan, if applicable. (Alignment with strategic plan is desirable but is <u>not</u> a requirement to receive funding.)
- Brief description of the membership's decision-making process to put together this application.

In addition to the Project Description, provide the following (not included in three page limit):

- Provide a **Project Budget**, using the template provided. Capacity-building efforts (e.g., professional development, etc.) are limited to no more than 40% of the funding (up to $4,000).
- On the bottom of the budget page, include a signed statement certifying the local ECO Net membership's collaborative group decision process (as described in the Project Description).

Below is provided an *example* of a work plan, however this is not a prescription for how ECO Nets must implement their projects.

Example Work Plan:

Tasks and Activities	Deliverable	Due Date

Conduct Membership Analysis:
• Project Coordinator shall work with local ECO Net Coordinator to solicit input from members on what to include in analysis at September membership meeting
• Project Coordinator shall use membership rosters and other resources to compile and analyze membership data. Project Coordinator shall follow up current members when needed. The analysis shall include, but is not limited to:
  - Organization type (e.g.
  - Audience served
  - Focus area
  - Activity/engagement level in ECO Net
• Project Coordinator shall work with local ECO Net Coordinator to survey and current members of barriers and motivators to increased activity/engagement in ECO Net
	Submit report summarizing:
	• Process of collecting and analyzing membership data
	• Current status of membership in terms of member diversity and level of member activity
	• Gaps in membership
	• Barriers and motivators to increased activity/engagement in ECO Net
		10/31/14

Create Membership Development Plan: • Project Coordinator shall work with ECO Net Coordinator to provide results of Membership Analysis to members and solicit feedback on membership development plan, including input on membership gaps to address, community groups to reach out to and what capacity-building activities for members to pursue. • Project Coordinator shall form a sub-committee of ECO Net members to develop Membership Development plan, using member feedback and results of membership analysis.	Submit Membership Development Plan including: • Recruitment plan for new ECO Net members • Plan to increase awareness of and collaboration with ECO Net to at least two stakeholder/community groups • Plan for member development/capacity building activities (e.g. professional development)	Draft plan to PSP by 11/30/14. Final plan due 12/15/14.
Implement Membership Development plan. Coordinate with PSP staff and other ECO Nets for member development or outreach activities when appropriate.	Submit quarterly progress reports	Begin implementation no later than January 2015
Project Evaluation: Evaluate success of membership/member development activities, provide results in final report.	Submit final report, including a summary of project activities, results, estimated increase in reach of ECO Net (as a result of the project), successes, lessons learned and recommendations.	Draft of final report to PSP by 6/12/15 Final report due 6/30/15

Estimated Budget

Please list costs associated with the proposed project under the following categories, using the template provided below. The budget page is not included in the three page limit for the project description.

Category	Requesting from PSP	ECO Network or Organizational Match[1]	Overall Project Budget
Project Coordination/Management (Staff salaries, benefits)			
Travel			
Goods, Services, and Supplies (provide details when possible)			
Sub-contractor expenses			
Indirect costs (Not to exceed 15%)[2]			
Totals			

I, _____, the local ECO Network Coordinator, certify that the application submitted was developed by a collaborative group decision process as described in the RFP.

_____   _____
       Signature   Date

---

[1] **Matching Funds-** There are no match requirements for this grant, however projects with matching funds are encouraged and favored.
[2] **Indirect-** Indirect costs are not to exceed 15% of direct project costs and are for general organization operating costs. Indirect costs can not include costs otherwise included in Project Administration.

Appendix A:
Project Costs: Eligible/Ineligible for Reimbursement

Project costs
Project costs shown in the budget of the grant agreement's Scope of Work **are eligible for reimbursement**, so long as the costs follow applicable state and federal laws.

If neither the grant agreement nor the guidelines specify the eligibility of an item, the Stewardship Coordinator Debbie Ruggles (debbie.ruggles@psp.wa.gov) will determine if an item is eligible for reimbursement. All eligible costs must support the accomplishment of the tasks outlined in the grant.

Eligible Costs
The following examples show the types of expenses that the Partnership can reimburse under the program guidelines:

- Project coordination, goods supplies, and services such as:
  - Project Coordinator salary and benefits;
  - Office supplies;
  - Long-distance telephone calls to participants or the Partnership;
  - Postage for newsletters, surveys, response cards, and grant invoices;
  - Costs of copying documents and printing fliers or notices;
  - Procuring technical assistance – advertising the need for services, developing the Request for Proposals, and contracting for services;
  - Mileage paid at the state reimbursement rate (currently $0.565/mile) for travel to and from project events within Washington State;
  - Rental of audio/visual equipment, public address systems, or display units;
  - Rental of space in which to display exhibits and/or conduct public meetings related to the grant project;
  - Costs of developing, publishing, and distributing explanatory materials within affected communities, or throughout the project area.
- Indirect costs are not to exceed 15% of direct project costs and, are for general organization operating costs. Indirect costs can not include costs otherwise included in Project Administration (see below).

The following costs must be directly related to the project goals and activities. The Partnership reserves the right to ask for more information about these expected costs and to consider them ineligible if they do not meet the intent of the grant purpose or the requirements of the funding source.

- Project Administration – not general indirect costs, but costs that can be tied to personnel like support staff, cost of office or cubicle space for the Project Coordinator, phone and IT costs directly allocated to the Project Coordinator for this project only, for example:
- Web page and web site update and maintenance activities;
- Computer software (data management, slide show, or word processing only) necessary to fulfill record-keeping requirements, project presentations, and tracking of grant activities;
- Telephone cards used specifically for grant activities;
- Small, portable equipment to enhance outreach efforts;
- Purchasing display equipment that identifies recipient and grant project at special events;
- Per Diem costs for meals and lodging.

If you have questions about certain expenses, talk with the Stewardship Coordinator before you budget for those expenses. Only eligible costs will be reimbursed.

Ineligible Costs

The following are examples of the types of expenses that the grant program will not reimburse:

- Subscriptions, contributions or donations;
- Purchases of equipment or other nonexpendable personal property, unless specified in the grant agreement;
- Purchase, operation, or maintenance of motor vehicles;
- Property or equipment depreciation;
- Land acquisitions, leases, or easements;
- Conservation easements; wildlife habitat development;
- Any activity, including data compilation, studies, plans, or campaigns, funded by other sources;
- Legal actions;
- Legal fees ;
- Lobbying any government official or agency;
- Any expense incurred prior to the authorization date on a signed grant agreement, including but not limited to costs associated with the preparation of the grant application;
- Bad debts or losses arising from uncollectible accounts;
- Fines and penalties;
- Alcoholic beverages
- Food, **unless specified in grant agreement.**